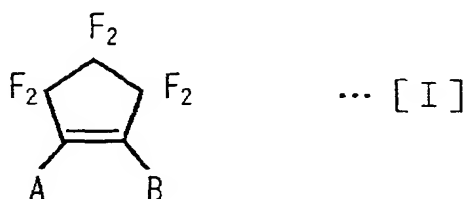
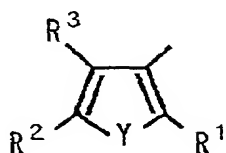


WHAT WE CLAIM IS:

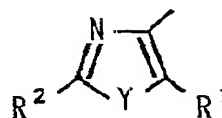
1. A photochromic material comprising a compound,
 belonging to the diheteroarylethene class, represented by the
 5 following general formula [I]:



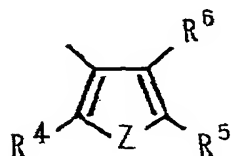
wherein, in the general formula [I], A represents the
 10 following substituents [i] or [ii], and B represents the
 following substituents [iii] or [iv];



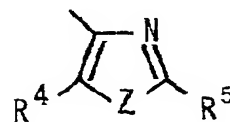
...[i]



...[ii]



...[iii]



...[iv]

wherein, in the substituents [i] and [ii], R¹ represents an alkoxy group, R² represents -Q-Ar, Q representing a direct bond or an arbitrary divalent group and Ar representing an aromatic hydrocarbon ring or an aromatic heterocycle which are optionally substituted, R³ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group, an alkoxy group, a halogen atom, a fluoroalkyl group, a cyano group, or an aryl group which is optionally substituted, and Y represents -O- or -S-; and

in the substituents [iii] and [iv], R⁴ represents an alkoxy group, R⁵ represents -Q-Ar, Q representing a direct bond or an arbitrary divalent group and Ar representing an aromatic hydrocarbon ring or an aromatic heterocycle which are optionally substituted, R⁶ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group, an alkoxy group, a halogen atom, a fluoroalkyl group, a cyano group, or an aryl group which is optionally substituted, and Z represents -O- or -S-.

2. A photochromic material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ring opening quantum yield is 10⁻³ or lower.

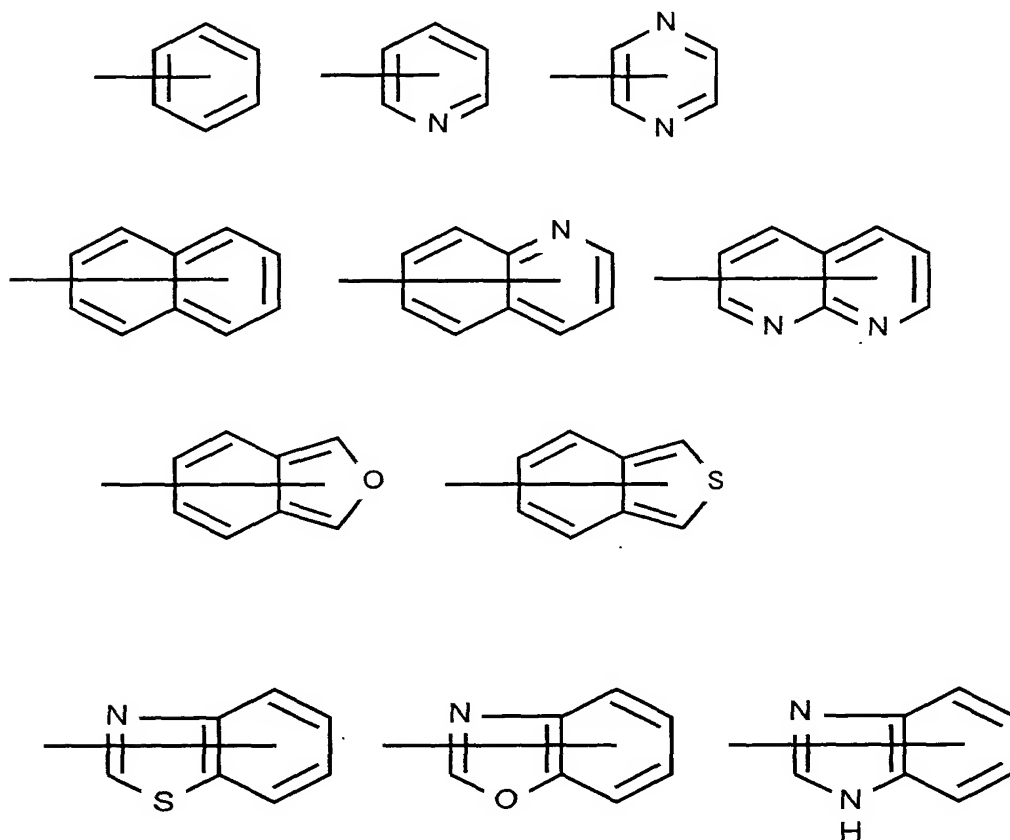
3. A photochromic material as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein R¹ and R⁴ in the substituents [i]-[iv] of said general formula [I] each comprise independently an alkoxy group having 1-3 carbon atoms.

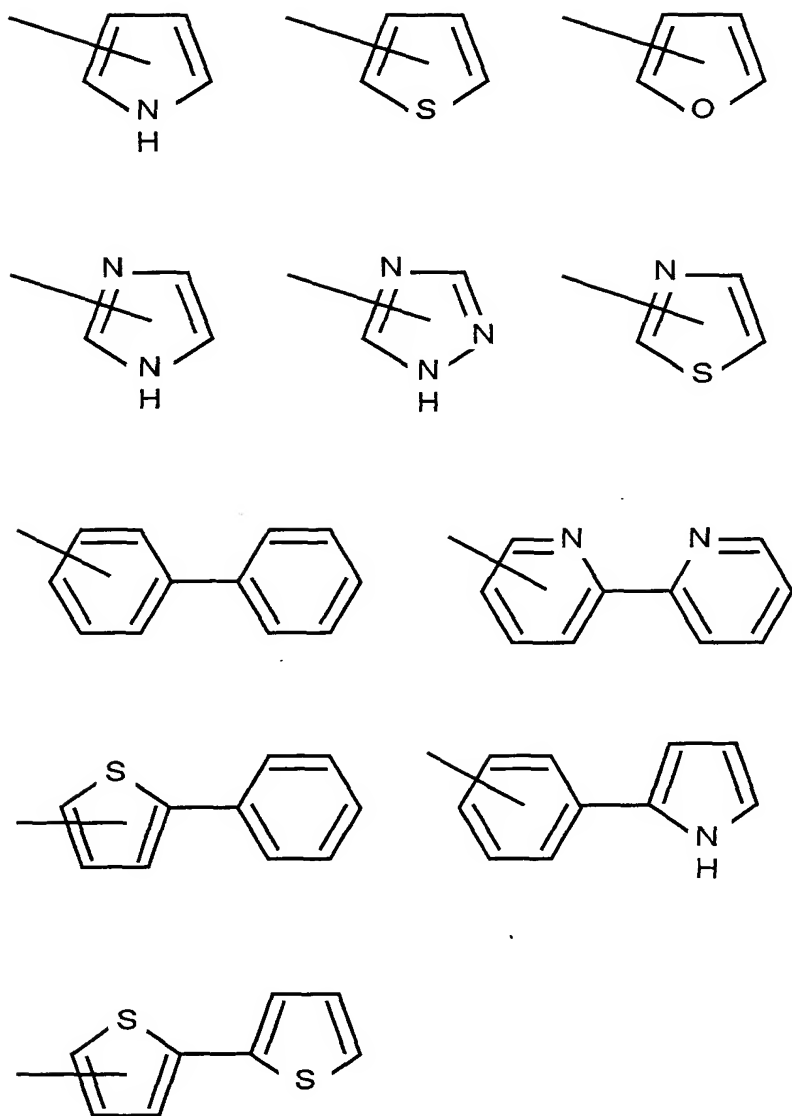
4. A photochromic material as claimed in claim 3, wherein R¹ and R⁴ each comprise a methoxy group.

5. A photochromic material described in anyone of claims 1-4 wherein Q in Q-Ar corresponding to R² and R⁵ in the substituents [i]-[iv] of said general formula [I] each

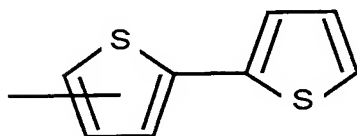
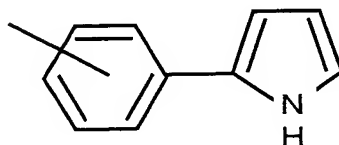
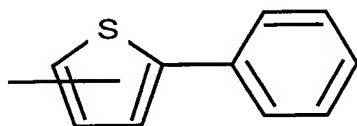
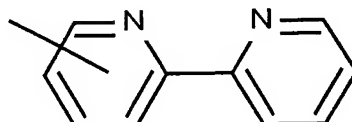
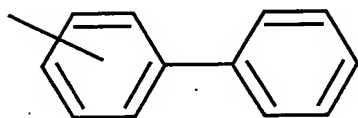
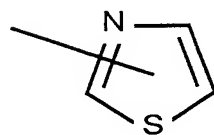
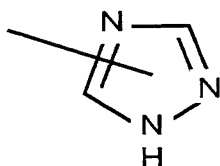
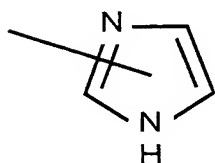
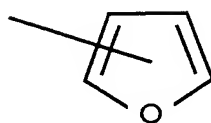
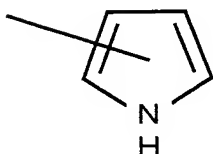
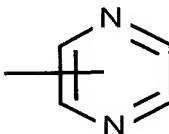
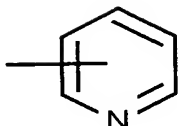
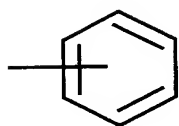
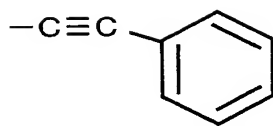
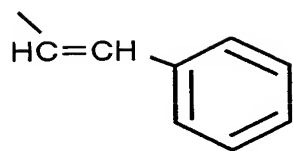
comprise independently a direct bond, $-(\text{-CH=CH-})_n-$ (i.e. a polyethylene group) (wherein $n = 1-5$), or $-(\text{-C}\equiv\text{C-})_n-$ (i.e. a polyacetylene group) (wherein $n = 1-5$), whereby Ar comprises a single 5- or 6-member ring, or two or three 5- or 6-member rings directly bonded or condensed, each of said rings being optionally substituted.

6. A photochromic material as claimed in claim 5, wherein Ar in Q-Ar corresponding to R^2 and R^5 is selected independently from the group consisting of the following formulae:





7. A photochromic material as claimed in claim 6,
 wherein R^2 and R^5 are each selected independently from the
 5 group consisting of the following formulae:



8. A photochromic material described in any one of claims 1 through 7, wherein R^3 and R^6 each comprise independently a linear alkyl group.

9. A photochromic material described in any one of claims 1 through 8, wherein the photochromic material comprises a compound, belonging to the diheteroarylethene class, selected from the group consisting of the following formulae:

